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INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

No. 24, September 27, 1977

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LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

Rights Update. In a review of recent human rights developments, Embassy Buenos Aires concludes that US rights concerns expressed during the August visits of high-level US officials and President Videla's trip to Washington will strengthen his hand vis-a-vis the hardliners and reinforce his resolve to curb abuses committed by renegade security personnel. At the same time, however, Videla must avoid policies which would make him vulnerable to charges of being "soft" on terrorism.

The Embassy also reports:

--continued kidnappings, with the Alfredo Bravo (September 8) and Deutsch family (August 27) cases

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heading the list; both detentions have been officially acknowledged;

--intensified activity by private human rights groups on behalf of disappeared persons;

--official banning of an anti-Semitic book without any prodding from the Jewish community, although Jewish leaders claim that other offensive literature is still being sold; and

--continuing trials for persons accused of security offenses--with light sentences for those only tenuously linked to subversive activity, and reduced sentences or releases for some prisoners who have cooperated with the police.

The kidnapping of Alfredo Bravo, labor leader and human rights activist, aggravated moderate/hardline disagreements because it is widely believed that the Navy orchestrated his kidnapping in order to embarrass Videla while he was in Washington. Whether or not Videla holds the Navy responsible for the Bravo abduction, he told journalists on September 21 that he was tired of having to assume responsibility for such acts, and he would personally act against the perpetrators of such offenses. (CONFIDENTIAL, Buenos Aires 6791 of September 13, 7059 of September 21, and 7119 of September 22)

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